

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge the indication of the allowability of the subject matter of Claims 5-10, as set forth in paragraph 5 of the Office Action. In particular, the latter claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Nevertheless, for the reasons set forth hereinafter, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 5-10 are allowable in their present dependent form.

Applicants thank the Examiner, Ms. Fleming, for her courtesy and assistance in advancing the prosecution of this application during an interview conducted July 7, 2004. As indicated in the Interview Summary, during the interview, a proposed amendment of Claims 1 and 20 was discussed, and it was agreed that with these revisions, the claims of record distinguish over the cited prior art. By the foregoing amendment, Applicants have adopted the claim revisions discussed during the interview, and accordingly, all claims of record are believed to distinguish over the cited Rink et al and Matsui et al references.

During the interview, counsel and the Examiner also discussed an additional reference, Braunschädel (U.S. Patent No. 6,056,318), which is not of record. As indicated in Figure 1, in Braunschädel, the gas bag 1 has a vent opening 2 which is covered by first and second layers of fabric 3,4. The first layer is inelastic and highly gas permeable, while the second layer 4 is elastic, but

relatively impermeable. As described in the specification at Column 2, lines 35-55, when the pressure in the gas bag increases, due, for example, to the impact of a body mass upon it, the higher pressure causes the fabric layer 4 to curve outwardly in the shape of a cup or bell, as shown in Figure 1, pushing the inelastic and highly permeable material 3 through the hole 2. An additional embodiment is shown in Figure 3 in which two identical fabric sections 9 are sewn together to produce a gas bag. In order to facilitate a contraction of the vent opening 2, a bottleneck-like shoulder 10 is provided in the fabric section 9 which, when the gas bag is inflated, forms a region in which the fabric is exposed to considerably smaller tensions than in remaining regions.

Claim 1 of the present application defines a safety device for a motor vehicle which includes a gas generator and an airbag connected to be filled by the gas generator in the event of an accident. In addition, Claim 1 further recites that the safety device includes at least one orifice, which is duct shaped, at least in a partial region, through which gas can flow. Finally, Claim 1 further recites that,

"the duct-shaped partial region has a flow resistance which adjusts automatically as a function of flow velocity of gas flowing through the orifice; and

said flow resistance increases with
increasing flow velocity of gas flowing through said
orifice."

The latter features of the invention are neither taught nor suggested by the Braunschädel reference. In particular, Claim 1 distinguishes over Braunschädel in that it recites that the orifice is "duct-shaped", and that the flow resistance increases with increasing flow velocity of gas flowing through the "duct-shaped" orifice. Claim 20, on the other hand, also contains the latter limitation. Finally, Claim 4 further distinguishes over Braunschädel, reciting that the orifice comprises a "tubular duct having a cross-section area which is elastically expandable". The latter feature of the invention is also neither taught nor suggested by Braunschädel.

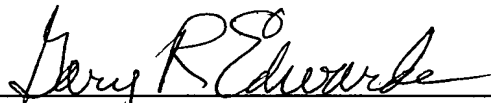
Accordingly, for the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1, 2 and 4-23 distinguish over not only the cited Rink et al and Matsui et al references, but the additional Braunschädel reference as well.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If

there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #225/50657).

Respectfully submitted,



Gary R. Edwards
Registration No. 31,824

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
GRE:kms
320169